

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

In response to the drawing objections, Figs. 1 and 2 have been amended to delete the reference to items 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Attachment: Annotated Sheet (Figs. 1-3)
Replacement Sheet (Figs. 1-3)

REMARKS

Claim 1 has been amended to recite one or more polymers selected from the group consisting of polylactic acid, (lactic acid-glycolic acid) copolymer, polyhydroxybutyric acid, polycaprolactone, biodegradable aliphatic polyesters, aliphatic polycarbonate, and their copolymers, based on page 5 of the Description, which was preliminarily amended on May 19, 2006. In view of the amendment of claim 1, claim 2 has been canceled. In view of the cancellation of claim 2, claim 3 has been amended to depend on claim 1. The drawings have been amended to resolve an issue raised by the Examiner.

Entry of the above amendment is respectfully requested.

Objection to the Specification

On page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner has objected to the brief description of the drawings corresponding to Figures 1 and 2, because the Figures refer to items 1, 2, 3 and 4, that are not described in the brief description.

In response, Applicants have amended the drawings to delete items 1, 2, 3 and 4 together with the attached arrows to resolve this issue. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the objection to the specification has been overcome, and withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Obviousness Rejection

On page 3 of the Office Action, claims 1-4 and 8-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Nishikawa et al. (Materials Sci. and Eng. C8-9: 495-500; 1999; of record), in view of Watanabe et al. (Biomacromolecules 3:1109- 1114; 2002; of record), and

further in view of Sawhney, A. (U.S. Patent No.: 6,818,018; filed Aug. 14, 1998). Further, on page 4 of the Office Action, claims 1 and 6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nishikawa et al. (Materials Sci. and Eng. C8-9: 495-500; 1999; of record), in view of Watanabe et al. (Biomacromolecules 3:1109- 1114; 2002; of record), and further in view of Sawhney, A. (U.S. Patent No.: 6,818,018; filed Aug. 14, 1998), as applied to claims 1-4 and 8-10 above, and further in view of Zou et al. (U.S. Patent Publication No.: 2002/0187105; filed Feb. 1, 2002).

In response, Applicants note initially that the Examiner correctly understands that Nishikawa et al. describe honeycomb-patterned thin films of amphiphilic co-polymers as cell culture substrates, wherein using amphiphilic polymers was crucial for preparing the honeycomb structure.

However, Applicants submit that in the instant invention, amphiphilic polymers are excluded according to the amendment set forth above, and a honeycomb-patterned film can never be produced from these non-amphiphilic polymers alone.

Under such circumstances, according to the present invention, a honeycomb-patterned film can be prepared by using even non-amphiphilic polymers in the presence of a phospholipid, which is not covalently bonded. Applicants submit that this was an unexpected phenomenon and provides a basis for non-obviousness.

Therefore, Applicants submit that the inventions of claim 1 and the claims dependent therefrom are not obvious over the cited art combinations. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Provisional Obviousness-Type Double Patenting Rejection

On page 7 of the Office Action, claims 1-4 and 6 are provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 4-10 and 12 of copending U.S. Patent Application No.: 10/552,685 (Patent Publication No.: 2006/0189911; commonly assigned).

Since this rejection is provisional, Applicants defer responding to this rejection at the present time.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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CUSTOMER NUMBER

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Fig. 1

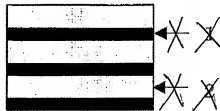


Fig. 2

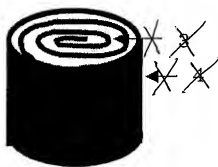


Fig. 3

